THE next LEVEL

A BLACKOUT PRODUCTIONS PUBLICATION

1:1 *Summer 1997*

SPECIAL BLACKOUT 97 ISSUE

BlackOut Productions Established in Cleveland

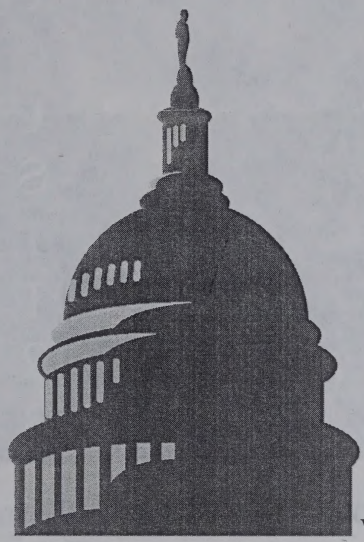
CLEVELAND -- African American businessmen have **Larry Webb** and **Derek Barnett** have formed an entertainment production company to serve Cleveland's African American Gay and Lesbian community. **BlackOut Productions (BOP)** was established to bring quality entertainment to the under-served African American population in this part of the country according to founders

Webb and Barnett describe the venture as a reaction to the emerging presence of self-aware African American Gays and Lesbians. "In some ways, this community is beginning to replicate the kind of community building that took place among Gays and Lesbians in the 1960's and 70's," stated Webb. "African American Gays and Lesbians now realize the power of professional networking and collective consumerism. BlackOut Productions was formed to help propel the process," he added.

The company's founders are currently planning **BlackOut 97**, a nationally billed entertainment event that will take place in Cleveland this summer. "We think the time is long over due for this kind of movement, and we want be in the forefront of bringing it to Cleveland," asserted Webb. "Many Lesbians and Gay men complain about the lack of entertainment events for our community. This summer, we want to take entertainment in Cleveland to the next level, and we're counting on our community to come out and support us," Webb continued.

The founders also affirmed the company's commitment to community self-empowerment. "Although many of the projects that we have planned are going to be entertainment related, the core motivation for what we are doing is actually very serious," Webb explained. cont. p. 4

BlackOut 97 promoted at Pride Weekend in DC

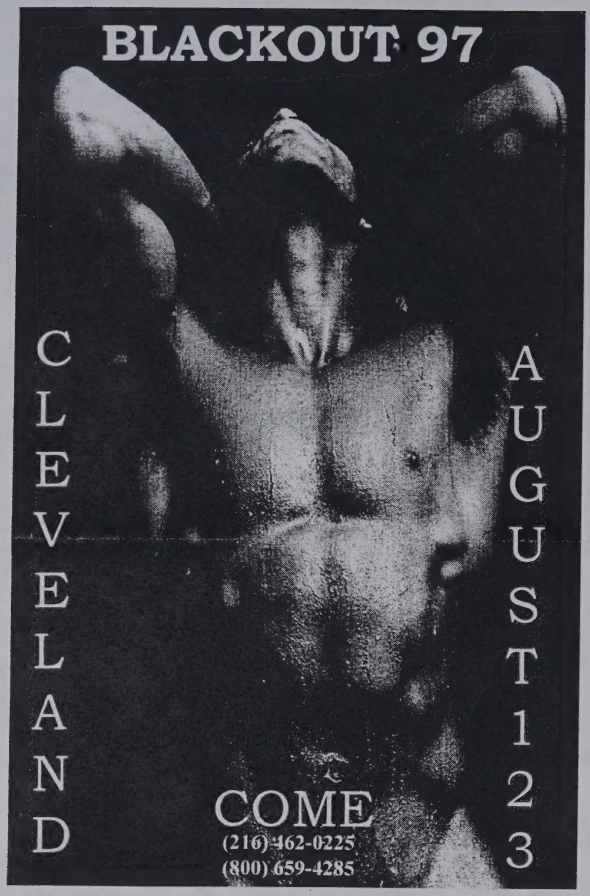


WASHINGTON -- **BlackOut 97** Event Coordinators, **Larry Webb** and **Derek Barnett** traveled to Washington DC during the Memorial Day weekend for that city's annual **Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Weekend**.

During the weekend, Webb and Barnett, accompanied by **Markous Hayes** of Chicago, **Greg Franklin** and **Lee Boyd**, both of Akron, Ohio, attended discussion groups, networking forums and club events to promote BlackOut 97.

"DC was a real proving ground for us," stated Webb. "We were, however, excited about the number of positive responses we received from sisters and brothers we met from all over the country," he added.

BlackOut Productions occupied a booth at the Main Event at Banneker field on Sunday afternoon. "We were still able to accomplish our mission despite the rain.," commented Barnett. ■



BlackOut 97 Schedule of Events

Friday, August 1, 1997

7:30 pm - 9:30 pm VIP Reception

10:30 pm - until **SHOWOUT!!**

A night of entertainment like no other ever before in Cleveland. ***Numbers***, 620 Frankfort Ave, Downtown

Saturday, August 2, 1997

The African American Gay and Lesbian Cultural and Educational Conference

Theme: Presenting a Holistic Approach to an Evolving African-American Gay and Lesbian Community ***Case Western Reserve University, Thwing Center***

10 am - 11 am	Continental Breakfast Registration
11am - 11:25 am	Welcome to BlackOut 97
11:30 am - 12:15 pm	Workshops
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm - 2 pm	Workshops
2:15 pm - 3 pm	Workshops

10:30 pm - until **WORKOUT!!**

Work out on the dance floor with nationally known DJ's. **Club Visions**, 1229 W. 6th St., Downtown

Sunday, August 3, 1997

12 noon - 5 pm **CHILLOUT!!**

Picnic at ***Edgewater Park*** on Cleveland's near west side

After BlackOut 97, the North Coast's African American Gay and Lesbian Community will never be the same

CLEVELAND -- **BlackOut Productions (BOP)** will host a national entertainment event in Cleveland this summer. The event, entitled **BlackOut 97** will be a cultural and entertainment event that will elevate the cultural standard in the African American Gay and Lesbian community in this region of the country. In keeping with the company's commitment to community service, proceeds from the event will benefit **Men of Color Concerned About AIDS (MOCCAA).** According to BOP event coordinators, preliminary planning began in January. Now planners are seeking sponsorship for the event.

"What we are planning is an event like none ever held before in Ohio," stated **Larry Webb**, event co-coordinator. "Almost everyone in our community either attends, or is familiar with, **Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Weekend** held each year in Washington DC, **At the Beach** in Los Angeles and Labor Day weekend in Atlanta. However, there is nothing like those events happening in this part of the country, despite the fact that the African American Gay and Lesbian community in this area is large enough to support one," added Webb, who is responsible for coordinating the entertainment for the event.

cont. p.4

Do you have a news item,announcement or ad for THE *next* LEVEL?

Just mail it to us at:

BlackOut Productions
26455 Magnolia Drive, No. 7
Cleveland, OH 44132-3335
or call (216) 462-0225 or (800) 569-4285

Two events will celebrate black gay-lesbian culture

by Doreen Cudnik

Cleveland—Two area organizations are planning summer events that will highlight the contributions of the African-American lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community, and celebrate black gay culture.

Larry Webb and Derek Barnett have formed BlackOut Productions, an entertainment production company designed to bring "quality entertainment to the underserved African American population in the midwestern part of the country."

Webb and Barnett told *SBC* Magazine in May that BlackOut Productions was born as a result of "the emerging presence of self-aware African-American lesbians and gays."

"In some ways, this community is beginning to replicate the kind of community building that took place among gays and lesbians in the 1960s and 70s," Webb said. "African American gays and lesbians are now realizing the power of professional networking and collective consumerism. BlackOut Productions was formed to help propel the process."

Barnett said the name BlackOut was picked "because it addresses the community we want to serve."

"As African Americans, this community is very proud of its blackness, and the term *out* recognizes the independence and defiance that that word represents in the gay and lesbian community."

DOREEN CUDNIK

Larry Webb, left, and Derek Barnett of Black Out Productions

BlackOut '97

The event they are planning, BlackOut '97, will take place over the weekend of August 1-3 at various locations throughout Cleveland. Webb and Barnett are contacting nationally known DJs and other entertainers about performing at the event. They have also begun an extensive sponsorship development campaign which includes soliciting over 40 companies.

There will be a welcoming reception on Friday night (details are still being worked out for the location), workshops during the day on Saturday, a main social event on Saturday evening and a wrap-up picnic produced by AJ Productions at Edgewater Park on Sunday afternoon.

Webb and Barnett hope that BlackOut '97 will bring to Cleveland the sense of pride and community generated by similar events held in cities like Washington, D.C., Detroit, Atlanta and Chicago.

"It's empowering to participate in these kinds of events," Webb said, recalling the pride he felt as a gay black man when he got together with other black gays and lesbians at the 1993 March on Washington, and that city's Black Pride celebrations. "You can't discount the power of our lives and the feeling we get when we network together."

Benefits fight against AIDS

While the weekend will center around social activities, Barnett and Webb said BlackOut '97 will be "more than just a big party." In keeping with the company's commitment to service, proceeds from the event will benefit Men of Color Concerned About AIDS, or MOCCAA. Established in 1994, MOCCAA's mission is to defeat the further spread of HIV in the African American community through education, advocacy, and community outreach programs.

"Because of the disturbingly high rate of HIV in the African American community, and because of the work MOCCAA does in the black gay community, we thought they were the best partner for us," Barnett said.

Barnett added that the workshops held during BlackOut '97 will be designed to cover the whole gamut of the black lesbian and gay experience.

"We often get so bogged down in addressing issues of sexuality that we don't speak to the entire person," he said. "In addition to some fun activities, the workshops at BlackOut '97 will deal with things like networking, legal issues, the African American church. The workshops we'll have promise to be enlightening."

While the event is designed with the African American community in mind, all people are invited to attend the celebration. Webb asked only that those attending BlackOut '97 events be respectful and remember that in the same way there are times when women need time to address issues that pertain exclusively to them, the same is true of the black gay and lesbian community.

"Anytime you have an event like this, you main concern is to empower your own—to take care of your own house," Webb said. "But it's also important to educate others."

He added that this event may be an opportunity for people of all races to build bridges with each other.

"Maybe one of the reasons we tend to be so divided is because we don't know each other," Webb said. "Sometimes we're even afraid of each other. Maybe this event will be an opportunity for the larger community to see that 1,000 African Americans can get together and nothing bad will happen."

"We want to lay the groundwork for a cohesive, economically-empowered, educated community," Barnett said. "The mainstream gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community has been doing this for decades, and they're starting to reap the benefits. The African American community is just starting this process. We want to help bring this discussion to the North Coast."

"We plan to put Cleveland on the map," Webb said, adding that they hope BlackOut will become an annual event.

Barnett added, "When people look at their calendars, and they say, 'I've got to go to Black Pride in D.C., my grandmother's house for Christmas, and BlackOut in Cleveland in August,' then we'll have done our jobs well."

For more information about BlackOut Productions, entertainment or sponsorship of BlackOut '97, or to be added to BlackOut Productions' mailing list, contact Larry Webb or Derek Barnett at 216-261-8811.

Black Pride set for August

While there is currently no affiliation between the two organizations, Cleveland Black Pride is also in the process of putting together an event that will involve the entire community. Plans are underway for what would be the first-ever Cleveland Black Pride event, and public relations director Ernest Horton said, "It's coming along pretty well."

"We're still in the planning process, trying to get vendors, to finalize our location. We want this to be an annual event, and we're asking for everyone's support."

Cleveland Black Pride was formed in August of 1996 and has a mailing list of over 200 names. They've been sponsoring monthly bar nights and the "Umoja Coffee Series," an informal discussion group that deals with important issues involving the black gay community.

They hold meetings at the Cleveland Lesbian-Gay Center on the first and third Sunday of the month at 3:00 pm. Meetings are open to "any individuals that feel they want to participate," Horton said.

"The founders of Cleveland Black Pride are fundamentally aware of the growing consciousness and self esteem of Cleveland's African American lesbian gay bisexual and transsexual community," Horton added. "Therefore our organization has designated a Sunday in August 1997 as our day of self-recognition, Pride and communal celebration." The actual date has not yet been decided.

Individuals interested in volunteering should contact Cleveland Black Pride, Inc. P.O. Box 602093, Cleveland, Ohio 44102. 216-556-4704.

"We welcome everyone in our community to share, participate, and network and help make this day happen," Horton said. ▽

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Dear Supporter:

BLACKOUT 97 cometh—fast and furious. Many of you know from our presentation on March 22nd that BlackOut Productions is planning the premier North Coast event to raise the collective consciousness of and about the African-American Gay and Lesbian community. This inaugural African-American Gay & Lesbian Cultural and Education Conference will be held August 1-3. This year's theme is: Presenting a Holistic Approach to an Evolving African-American Gay and Lesbian Community.

The scope of this event has grown beyond the concept of BlackOut Productions hosting a weekend of entertainment events that will benefit Men of Color Concerned with AIDS (MOCCAA). While AIDS is a very important issue in the Gay and Lesbian community, and indeed the world, BlackOut Productions feels there's more. The real issue in the Gay and Lesbian community, particularly the African-American Gay and Lesbian community, is helping our fellow brothers and sisters in leading productive, healthy, wholesome lives by developing the true being in all of us. Therefore, the annual BlackOut weekend will be an event dedicated to the entertainment **and** education of the African-American Gay and Lesbian community.

BlackOut 97 will address the educational aspect of this mission by holding workshops relating to health, employment, relationship, spiritual and other lifestyle issues that will encourage the holistic development of our selves. As you can see from the enclosure, BlackOut 97 also will include several entertainment events to meet and greet and celebrate.

How can you help this event be a roaring success? Pre-purchase your weekend passes and advertisements now. Please use the enclosed registration form to indicate your level of participation and mail your check or money order today.

If you should have any questions, please contact us at (800) 659-4285 or (216) 462-0225.

Sincerely,

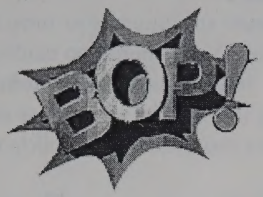
Larry Webb

Larry Webb

Sincerely,

Derek Barnett

Derek Barnett



BLACKOUT PRODUCTIONS
26455 MAGNOLIA DR., NO. 7 • CLEVELAND OHIO 44132-3335 • 216 • 261 • 8811

BlackOut 97
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, August 1, 1997
7:30 - 9:30 pm VIP Reception
10:30 pm Until ShowOut!!

Saturday, August 2, 1997
10:00 - 11:00 Continental Breakfast
Registration
11:00 - 11:25 Welcome to BLACKOUT 97
11:30 - 12:15 Workshops:
12:15 - 1:15 Lunch
1:15 - 2:00 Workshops
2:15 - 3:00 Workshops
10:30 - Until WORKOUT!!

Sunday, August 3, 1997
12:00-5:00 CHILLOUT!!--Picnic at
Edgewater Park
on Cleveland's Near Westside

****

Onyx Pass - $40
Friday - Showout
Saturday - Workshops, Workout
Sunday - Chillout

Noir Pass - $30
Friday - Showout
Saturday - Workout
Sunday - Chillout

Patron Name listing
Regular Type **$10**
Italics **$15**
Bold **$20**

Workshops Only - $25
Showout - $15
Workout - $15

1/8 Page Advertisement **$40**
(for larger advertisement, inquire at the number below)

Name:_____ Telephone #:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip Code: _____

__	Onyx Pass @ $40	$.	Patron Listing	
__	Noir Pass @ $30	$.	Regular Type	$.
__	Workshops @ $25	$.	Italics	$.
__	Showout @ $15	$.	Bold	$.
__	Noir Pass @ $15	$.	1/8 Page Ad	$.

Amount of Check: $.
Please make check or money order payable to **BlackOut 97**. Mail to 26455 Magnolia Drive, No. 7, Cleveland, OH 44132.

You can be a sponsor of BlackOut 97!

Don't miss your opportunity to show your support for the largest event ever to benefit the African American Gay and Lesbian community in Ohio and surrounding states. This event will benefit the non-profit organization **Men of Color Concerned About AIDS (MOCCAA).** MOCCAA is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your contribution as a patron will be 100 percent tax deductible. BlackOut 97's planning committee invites you to be patron. For your contribution, you can be recognized in the official BlackOut 97 souvenir booklet.

Regular Type ☐
$10

Italics ☐
$15

Bold ☐
$20

1/8 page advertisement (business card) ☐
$40

1/4 page - $75 ☐
1/2 page - $125 ☐
Full page - $250 ☐
Back page - $750 ☐
Inside front/inside back page - $500 ☐
Centerfold - $1,000 ☐

BlackOut 97 Ticket/Weekend Pass Order Form

Please indicate (☑) which event(s) you will attend

ShowOut!! ☐
Friday, August 1, 1997
10:30pm - until
$15

WorkOut!! ☐
Saturday August 2, 1997
$15

The African American Gay and Lesbian Cultural and Educational Conference ☐
Saturday, August 2, 1997
10am - 3pm
$25

ChillOut!! ☐
Sunday, August 3, 1997
12 noon - 5pm
Edgewater Park
Free (weekend pass holders receive complementary refreshments)

Order a Weekend pass and save! Weekend passes are available, and will allow entry to BlackOut 97 events without the purchase of a ticket. *Order now!* There are a limited number of weekend passes available.

Onyx Pass - $40 ☐
Friday - ShowOut!!
Saturday - Workshops
Saturday - WorkOut!!
Sunday - ChillOut!!

Noir Pass - $30 ☐
Friday - ShowOut!!
Saturday - WorkOut!!
Sunday - ChillOut!!

Name

Address apt#

City State Zip

Daytime Telephone Number

Please make check or money order payable to **BlackOut 97**, and mail to:
BlackOut Productions
26455 Magnolia Drive, No. 7
Cleveland, Ohio 44132-3335

BlackOut 97 cont. from p. 2

Established in 1994, MOCCAA's mission is to defeat the further spread of HIV in the African American community through education, advocacy, community outreach programs, collaborative alliances and progressive responses to public policy. "We must empower our own to undertake the responsibility of placing HIV at bay," asserted **Marcus Lowe**, executive director of MOCCAA.

Currently, BOP event coordinators are contacting nationally renowned DJ's and other entertainers about performing at the event. The coordinators have also begun an extensive sponsorship development campaign which includes soliciting over 40 companies. ■

BlackOut Productions Event Hotline
(216) 462-0225
(800) 659-4285

BOP Established cont. from p. 1

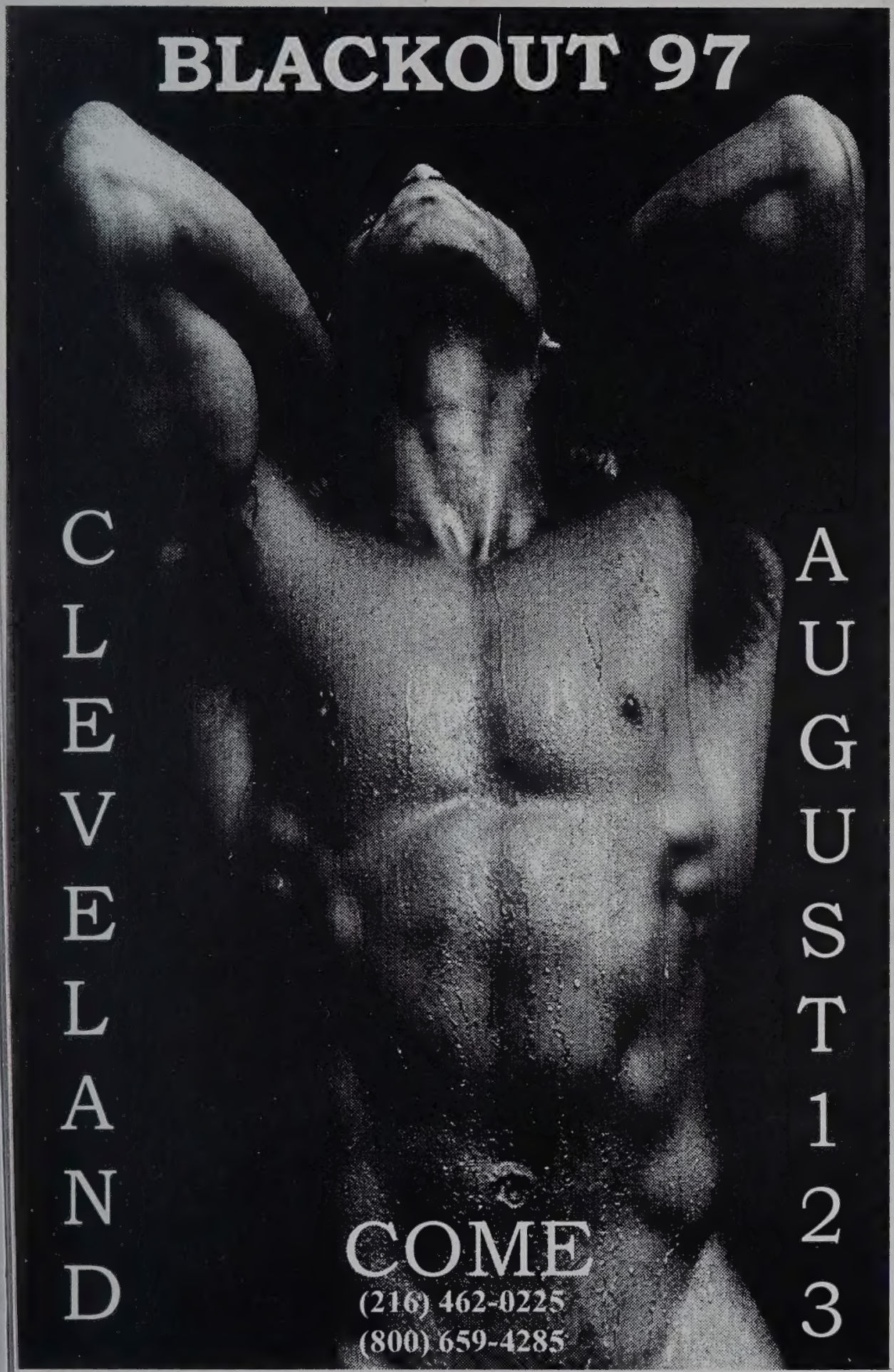
"We're not trying to do it all by ourselves. We've begun the process of coalition building with other established organizations in our community, such as **Men of Color Concerned About AIDS**, **Jo Yo Productions** and **A.J. Productions**, and we hope to have as many people on the bandwagon as possible," he added.

"The name, BlackOut, was picked because it addresses the community we want to serve," explained Barnett. "As African Americans, this community is very proud of its *Black*ness, and the term '*Out*' recognizes the independence and defiance that that word represents in the Gay and Lesbian community," he expounded. ■

The African American Gay and Lesbian Cultural and Educational Conference
Saturday, August 2, 1997 10 AM -3PM
Case Western Resreve University, Thwing Center

Workshop Titles (tentative):

- *Beyond 'OUT:' A Survivor's Guide to Being Black and Gay in America*
- *The African American Church and Gays and Lesbians: Ne'er the Twain Shall Meet*
- *Jumping Over the Legal Hurdle: Things You Need to Know About Your Legal Options*
- *Light at the End of the Tunnel: an Important Discussion About Recent Advancements Made in the Battle Against AIDS*
- *What African American Gay and Lesbian Network?: Networking Information for the Person Who Thinks He or She Knows Everything*
- *P-A-R-T-Y!!: Planning Your Own Safer Sex (Information) Party*
- *Fostering Supportive and Loving Family Relationships*
- Others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BlackOut 97

▼**Friday, August 1**

SHOWOUT!! **$15**

Featuring **LIVE!** Entertainment

International Recording Artist - Kevin Bryant (Atlanta)

Also Featuring: Paris Greer (Detroit) & Dorian (Cleveland)

Music Maestro DJ Chris Johnson (L.A.)

Numbers NiteClub - 620 Frankfort Ave

Showtime Midnite, Catered Buffet Prior to Show!

▼**Saturday, August 2**

African-American Gay and Lesbian **$25**

Cultural and Educational Conference 10:30 am - 3:00 pm

Case Western Reserve University-Thwing Center

Guest Speaker: James Earl Hardy

Author of *B-Boy Blues & 2nd Time Around*

Continental Breakfast and Lunch Served

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For More Info: 216.462.0225 or 800.659.4285

Blackout 97

V.I.P.

You and a guest are cordially invited to BlackOut 97's V.I.P. Reception. This is our chance to say thank you to those who's assistance has been invaluable, as well as welcome new friends into the fold. Please join us:

Friday, August 1st
Chesterfild Apartments
1801 East 12th Street
Cleveland, Ohio
Penthouse Party Room
7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Casual Sophisticated Attire

Harpist: Calvin Stokes
Flutist: Bill Hughes

R.S.V.P. at 462.0225 or 800.659.4285

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JESSYE NORMAN SINGS FOR THE HEALING OF AIDS

PREMIERE BROADCAST

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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Mail to: The Balm In Gilead, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 1300
New York, NY 10036

THE BALM IN GILEAD
130 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036

Monday December 1, 1997 World AIDS Day
8:00 PM (EST) WNET Channel 13, New York
7:00 PM (PST) KCET Channel 28, Los Angeles

Thursday December 25, 1997
WGTV, Channel 8, Atlanta

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Design: Moore Creative Marketing

Monday December 1, 1997 World AIDS Day
8:00 PM (EST) WNET Channel 13, New York
7:00 PM (PST) KCET Channel 28, Los Angeles

Thursday December 25, 1997
WGTV, Channel 8, Atlanta

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